

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Organisation name | Oxford International Language School |
| Inspection date   | 20 July 2017                         |

**BACKGROUND**
**Organisation profile**

| Inspection history  | Dates/details |
|---|---------------|
| First inspection  | October 2016  |
| Last full inspection  | October 2016  |
| Subsequent spot check (if applicable)                             | N/a           |
| Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)                    | N/a           |
| Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)                          | N/a           |
| Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre | N/a           |
| Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates               | N/a           |
| Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates           | N/a           |

**Current accreditation status and reason for spot check**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Current accredited status | Accredited                                     |
| Reason for spot check     | Signalled: end accreditation for one year only |

**Premises profile**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Address of main site   | The Old Music Hall, 106–108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE   |
| Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection     | None  |
| Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection | None  |
| Sites inspected  | The school has premises in a business centre on a shopping street, approximately ten minutes' walk from the city centre. The offices are owned and managed by an organisation specialising in supporting small companies and those with an ethical orientation. The school currently uses one classroom and a room set up as a library on one floor, and a second classroom and an office on the floor above. Additional classrooms or meeting rooms are available to rent as the need arises. Facilities shared with other tenants in the building include a kitchen, a separate relaxation room with another kitchen, toilets, some with showers, and a terrace with outdoor furniture. |

| <b>Student and staff profile</b>                 | <b>At inspection</b>          | <b>In peak week July</b>      |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)         | 10                            | 25                            |
| Minimum age (including closed group or vacation) | 16                            | 16                            |
| Typical age range                                | 19–30                         | 19–30                         |
| Typical length of stay                           | 6 months (PT)<br>3 weeks (FT) | 6 months (PT)<br>3 weeks (FT) |
| Predominant nationalities                        | Spanish, Italian, German      | Spanish, Italian, German      |
| Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses | 4                             | 4                             |
| Total number of administrative/ancillary staff   | 1                             | 1                             |

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Oxford International Language School (Oxford ILS) was established in 2012. The school was set up by the two directors, who are also the owners. The school director previously ran a management consultancy business and the academic director previously owned and ran a language school in London. They are assisted by an office and accommodation manager. The directors' aim for the school is to provide high quality courses at an affordable price.

The school was accredited in 2016 for an initial period of one year, with a recommendation for a spot check in the first year to determine whether accreditation should be extended beyond this period. Detailed and thorough systems and procedures had only recently been put in place and there had been insufficient time to assess their efficacy. A junior programme was planned but had not yet taken place.

The school offers full-time and part-time general English courses and preparation courses for external English examinations, and IELTS, for adults (16+). One to one tuition is also offered, and some has taken place since the last inspection. A junior programme of two two-week courses in July 2017 for students aged 14–17 was advertised, and suitable premises in central Oxford secured, but the courses did not run.

Since the last inspection full-time courses at levels from pre-intermediate to upper intermediate have run with small class sizes. One full-time preparation class for IELTS took place in early 2017. Part-time evening classes are offered throughout the year. There has been some increase in enrolments for classes on Saturday mornings from people working in Oxford during the week: two examination preparation classes and two general English classes were being taught on Saturdays from April to July.

### **Preparation**

The spot check was carried out by two inspectors, one of whom had been part of the inspection team for the first inspection in October 2016. They were asked by the Accreditation Unit to visit the school when the advertised course for juniors would be running in July, since this course type was not running at the time of the last inspection. The reporting inspector spoke to both directors to check whether any days should be avoided for the visit, but the precise date of the visit was not given to the school. In fact, the junior course did not run but the visit was made in July as there were summer courses for adults.

The inspectors were sent a copy of the last inspection report and other relevant documentation. The academic director sent the inspectors an action plan detailing how the school had addressed the points raised at the last inspection. The inspectors checked the school's website before the visit.

### **Programme and persons present**

The inspectors arrived at 09.15 and left at 15.30. They talked to the school director, the academic director and the office and accommodation manager. They each observed each of the two teachers teaching on the day of the visit. They spoke to the teachers, and the students.

## FINDINGS

---

### Management

The management team of the two directors has remained the same. The office administrator in post at the time of the last inspection has been promoted to office and accommodation manager. It is a stable and close-knit team who share the same office; much communication is informal but regular management meetings take place, and are minuted.

Some steady growth in student numbers has been experienced, particularly for part-time courses for people living and working in Oxford. A plan to increase the marketing of the courses and recruit more agents is in place.

There were two teachers working at the time of the spot check. One teacher had been teaching in the school at the time of the inspection in 2016. He is self-employed, and relevant documentation was on file. A second teacher, who is TEFLI, was recruited at the beginning of 2017 and has a fixed-term contract. The contract did not make clear that she is not self-employed and is on the school's payroll. The school director amended the contract during the spot check and it is now clear. The teacher's file contained all the required documentation.

In April 2017 the office administrator had an appraisal and was promoted to office and accommodation manager. Her job description was on file. She has been working on aspects of student accommodation under the supervision of the school director.

The management team take continuing professional development (CPD) for their staff very seriously. The office and accommodation manager has been supported financially on a writing skills course, and on a preparation course for an external advanced general English examination. The teacher recruited in 2017 was paid to attend two days of IELTS training in June 2017, and will be supported financially to study for her diploma-level teaching qualification on an intensive course in October 2017.

There are regular management meetings to review feedback and plan developments. Student feedback sampled showed that feedback had been good, any issues are followed up promptly, and action taken is recorded. There is a monthly teachers' meeting where teachers can give feedback. They told the inspectors they felt their opinions were valued. It is clear that students are generally very satisfied with their experience in the school, and staff enjoy working there.

The school's publicity materials give a fair and accurate picture of the school and its courses.

### Premises

The school premises, which are within a larger set of premises with rooms and facilities leased to a number of different companies, are unchanged since the last inspection. At the time of the spot check two classrooms were in use, and the school has access to more if needed. One room is set up as a library, and staff and students have access to a kitchen for tea/coffee and for preparing lunch. The library is available to teachers if they want to prepare lessons on site.

The premises are very well maintained.

Students and teachers told the inspectors they were happy with the premises.

### Academic management

Various developments have taken place in relation to academic management in the school.

The teacher handbook has been updated. There is now practical advice for teachers on how to manage continuous enrolment, and a CPD session on this aspect of the school's courses was held. Continuing students now have a standalone lesson on Monday mornings when new students are tested and inducted, and new materials are introduced only when the new classes are formed later in the morning.

Tutorials have been introduced for full-time students every two weeks. A tutorial is a one-to-one session timetabled on a Friday morning during the weekly progress test. The tutorial lasts about 15–20 minutes and teachers use a template with a set of questions to use. Tutorial records were seen on file.

A learning portfolio has also been introduced for full-time students; in this way students are helped to organise and reflect on the work they have completed as part of their course.

Weekly CPD sessions take place for the teachers. The two directors and the two teachers take turns in identifying a practical topic of interest, and each then plans and leads a session. Teachers are paid to lead and attend sessions. Recent topics have included improving classroom boardwork, and teaching pronunciation, and the teachers told the inspectors they had found the sessions very useful.

---

---

The academic director also works with the teachers on practical aspects of teaching using webinars.

A regular programme of observations is in place. The academic director observes a teacher every time he or she has a new class or starts teaching a new level. Feedback is provided and was seen on file.

### **Welfare and student services**

The premises are secure. All students, staff and visitors to the school have to ring at the entrance to the building at street level and wait to be let in, and accompanied to the school office.

### **Accommodation**

The office and accommodation manager is responsible for the approximately fifteen homestays currently on the school's database. She has visited all the homestays with the school director, and all the required documentation is requested.

Five homestay records were sampled.

- (i) One host had a DBS number on file which was more than three years old.
- (ii) One homestay, hosting a 16 year-old, had no DBS number on file for the main host's husband.
- (iii) Three homestays had not sent in the requested fire risk assessments.

Immediately following the spot check visit the inspectors were sent information about action taken by the school:

- (i) The first host will take only adult students until the school completes a new DBS check for her.
- (ii) This DBS check is outstanding. The person has a DBS check from his current employment but the school needs to complete a new DBS check for him immediately.
- (iii) One homestay completed the fire risk assessment immediately. One will do so on return from holiday. The third host did not reply and has been removed from the school's database.

The reporting inspector reminded the office and accommodation manager that the school must carry out its own DBS checks on homestay adults before placing any students aged under 18 with them, and not rely on checks from their current or previous employment. The demand for homestay accommodation is low so this process can be completed well before any groups of under 18s are enrolled in 2018.

### **Care of under 18s**

The school accepts 16 and 17 year-olds on its adult courses. There was one 16 year-old in an adult class at the time of the spot check. The office and accommodation manager checks his attendance and well-being as he has to sign in and out in the office every day.

Although the summer course for under 18s did not run in 2017, the school accepted a closed group of ten students aged 14–15 from a secondary school in Poland in January 2017. The group came with a teacher. The course teacher has a DBS number on file. The students were supervised at break times and when they went out at lunchtimes. Next of kin details and comprehensive parental consent forms were seen on file.

The group had lessons in the morning and a varied programme of visits and activities in the afternoon. These were organised by the office and accommodation manager, who also accompanied the group on all activities and excursions. The students stayed in homestays, and taxis home were organised after evening activities. Risk assessments were on file for each activity, with an excursion activity form, which the leader fills in afterwards so that the school can collect and respond to the feedback.

Feedback from the students on this course seen on file was very good.

---

## **POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED**

---

### **Management**

M6 Two of the three teachers' files lacked evidence of Level 6 qualifications.

**No longer applicable as these two teachers are not working in the school. There were copies of Level 6 qualifications on file for both teachers working at the time of the spot check visit.**

### **Teaching and learning**

T9 The section on continuous enrolment in the teacher handbook does not contain suggestions for dealing with new arrivals or departing students.

**Addressed. Guidance has been added to the teacher handbook and a CPD session was run. Continuing students do a standalone lesson on Mondays while new students are tested and have an induction. New material is then started when the new students and continuing students join each other in their new class.**

T14 Written course outlines are expressed as aims rather than as learning outcomes, meaning that students do not

---

---

always understand what they will be able to achieve in individual lessons.

**Addressed. The written course outlines have been amended to focus on learning outcomes. Teachers write the aims and outcomes of lessons on the whiteboard; this was seen in the classes observed.**

T15 There was no evidence of the study strategies being systematically implemented.

**Addressed. Various measures have been put in place to help learners become more independent learners, including a learning portfolio and tutorials to assist students in setting learning goals and discussing how to achieve them.**

T23 The knowledge of grammatical systems was not always sound.

T24 It was not always evident that the information in the student profiles had been taken into account when planning the lessons.

T25 It was not always clear how lesson aims were relevant to the particular students.

T26 Sometimes teachers reformulated and explained, which meant that they dominated the lesson too much. Very little variety of pace was observed.

T27 Opportunities were missed for using the screen and online resources. Board work was disorganised, with random words written up and it was not clear to students whether to record these items, and if so, how.

T28 Feedback and correction was not always systematic.

T29 Tasks were not always successfully set up which meant that the clarity of progression was lost.

T30 Opportunities to engage the students further, by referring to their own lives and experiences, were not always taken.

**T23–T30 refer to the teaching seen at the last inspection. These points have been discussed and addressed in CPD sessions, and the academic director has carried out observations with a focus on these aspects of teaching. See comments on observations carried out during the spot check visit.**

### **Welfare and student services**

W4 The language in the students' version of the school's policy for dealing with abusive behaviour is difficult for students to access with lower levels of English.

**Addressed. The language in the policy has been simplified.**

W28 There is insufficient detail in the risk assessments in terms of practical guidelines on to how to respond to situations where students are at risk.

**Addressed. Practical guidelines have been added to the risk assessments.**

### **Care of under 18s**

C3 The parental consent form on the website has insufficient information about the additional supervision provided and the rules in place for junior courses.

**Addressed. The consent form is now entirely suitable.**

---

### **Points to be addressed arising from this visit**

C4 One DBS check for a host's husband is not in place. The school must ensure that it carries out DBS checks for all adults in the homestays before placing students aged under 18 with them, and that no reliance is placed on DBS checks an individual may have from current, or previous, employment.

---

## **CONCLUSIONS**

---

The school has a stable team, good premises, and continues to maintain appropriate standards in all aspects of its operation. A number of initiatives in relation to academic management have been established. All the points from the last inspection have been addressed.

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

---

Accreditation should be continued for a further three years. The next inspection falls due in 2020; there are no grounds for bringing this forward. However, the committee recommended the submission of documentary evidence to demonstrate that action to address issues in accommodation has been completed.

---

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

### **Changes to summary statement**

---

Closed group courses for under 18s can be added to the summary statement.

---

---

**Original summary statement**

---

The British Council inspected and accredited Oxford International Language School in October 2016. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see [www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+) and vacation courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the area of premises and facilities.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

---

**Revised summary statement**

---

The British Council inspected and accredited Oxford International Language School in October 2016. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see [www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation) for details).

This private language school offers courses in general English for adults (16+), vacation and closed group courses for under 18s.

Strengths were noted in the area of premises and facilities.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

---